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FOR BETTER HIGHWAYS.

Judge Scott, of Marion county, president of the Oregon Good Roads Association, has appointed a committee on legislation. This committee will prepare and submit to the legislature for enactment such bills as may be deemed essential to further the work of building good roads throughout the state. The legislature will unquestionably adopt any suggestions which the association committee has to offer, and the draft will therefore be awaited with interest by all Oregonians.

Among the proposals to be considered by the committee is that having for its aim employment of convicts on roads. This proposition has so often been put forth that it is rather an old story, but just the same it is one for the serious consideration of the legislature. There seems to be little reason why some advantageous use should not be made of the convicts. At present they are engaged in stove-making and other similar work, and thrifty contractors reap the profit of their labor. They should be engaged instead in the building of roads. In this manner the people would reap the benefit, and we would have highways that perhaps would not otherwise be constructed for many years to come.

There are a great many things which will tend to upbuild our state, but good roads are most important of all. We have our growing cities, our large manufacturing enterprises, and our wealth of minerals, timber, fish, etc., but without the agricultural interest Oregon can not prosper. Our farming sections will not thrive unless good roads are built. Here in Clatsop we have had ample proof of this. The fertile Nehalem valley, capable of producing millions of wealth yearly, is almost deserted, for the reason that the roads are bad. Good roads to the Nehalem from Astoria would add several thousand to the population of the county, and give a proportionate impetus to city trade.

The situation in Clatsop county faithfully portrays that in the state. A few counties have built good roads, but generally speaking the farming community is suffering because of the lack of suitable highways. Any plan calculated to better road conditions should and will meet with the hearty approval of the people of the state, and it is sincerely to be hoped the legislature will enact the necessary legislation.

FOUR GOOD AMERICANS.

Four good Americans on the platforms of two great parties make the most satisfactory exhibit that America has presented to the world for many a moon, says the Saturday Evening Post. We will lay aside for the moment their political creeds and policies—we shall have enough of them later to make us weary—and we proceed to gaze upon the nominees as human products. There they are—picked from a population of 80,000,000 for the vote of 16,000,000 sovereigns whose sceptres are ballots.

Three of the four, Messrs. Parker, Fairbanks and Davis, are six feet or over, and the fourth, Mr. Roosevelt, is six feet in everything but a few material inches. The three six-footers are farmers' boys, country-born, country bred and country-fond. Mr. Parker plowed and hoed the field and milked the cows. There is a story that he once ran away to a circus and carried water to the elephants, but this is an obvious campaign dodge to divide the strenuous vote. Senator Fairbanks had a hard road to travel, but he worked his way on and up. Mr. Davis was farm hand and railroad brakeman, and finally millionaire many times over. Roosevelt was from the City; the close streets and brick walls gave him a sickly youth, but he broke away to the prairies and the mountains, and nature cured his ills and changed the weakling into one of the strongest and sturdiest personalities of this generation. So, without stretching the truth, we may say that all four of our exhibits proclaim the greatness of the country.

We find in each of them an enormous capacity for work, the result of heroic training and right living. Take the extreme case, Mr. Davis, who will soon be 81. The idea of nominating a man that old seemed absurd. And so it would be ordinarily. But Mr. Davis is not ordinary. A few years ago the present writer was with him on a trip to the West Virginia wilds. There was all-night traveling with early morning starts, long stretches, and much wear and

tear. Senator Davis was the oldest in the party, but the youngest in action, and promptest to bed at night, the earliest up in the morning and the cheerfulest all day through. He took interest in everybody and everything, whether up on the mountain grades or down in the coal mines. So, although over fourscore, he is not so aged as most men of 50. Judge Parker got the news of his nomination as he took his morning swim in the Hudson. Honors did not change the aplomb of Senator Fairbanks the fraction of an emotion. And as for President Roosevelt, when the message from Chicago came he grinned at the circle of newspaper men sitting in the white house as his guests and said: "De-lighted." No frills about these Americans, no false front, no humbug! Good, honest products, all of them!

There is another great American fact in their lives—or shall we call it a world fact? Every one of them gives his mother the credit for the good that is in him or for his success in making his years worth something. The mothers of two of them are living, and it was delightful to read their estimates of their boys—especially was it cheering to know that the boys were had enough to be thrashed occasionally, and thrashed hard, too. Surely that touch of nature should make most of us kin.

Habits? All of our four Americans were abstemious, hard-working, eager for opportunity. No clock-watchers they. No eight-hour men. No speculators in money or convictions. Note this further fact: they all cultivated and maintained a fine optimism. Their loyalty to their country was next to their religion. They believed in its future. Two of them staked their careers on their belief in character as an asset in politics—and they lead their parties today. Two of them believed in character and also in their nation's growth, and they built up transportation enterprises and went into public life, and they are millionaires and candidates for vice-president.

Altogether it is an exhibit that gives satisfaction and that should provoke your proper pride. Now that you have good men, trot out your party prejudices and be happy in the knowledge that you will choose well even if you vote the losing ticket.

An enlarged and elevating idea of the value of the consular service of the United States, the gibe of many rather cheap political jokes, and the burden of much volunteer counsel for the improvement of the civil service, is afforded in the index to the daily reports published, last year, by the new department of commerce and labor, which has taken over the consular work from the state department. Not less than 6000 reports on as many topics directly concerning all phases of business, of politics and of human progress in almost every department of activity have been published and distributed to those who are willing to accept and read them, the whole forming a compendium of the current history of the world, which perhaps could be found nowhere else and certainly nowhere near as authentic and convincing. It must be remembered that the consuls write under the twofold responsibility of official duty and of personal identity, and what they say must therefore be of much more value than the observations and more or less imaginative work of newspaper and magazine writers, who sometimes sacrifice accuracy to effect, and are reluctant to spoil a good story. Continuous examination of the daily consular reports is among the most rewarding uses to which business houses, interested in promoting their own export trade, or students of the world's affairs and commerce can devote time.

The populist candidates for president and vice president have been publicly notified of their nomination, amid much cheering. If the newspaper accounts shall be regarded as public, the same gentlemen will be informed of their defeat in somewhat similar manner.

The regatta is going to be a success because of the intelligent effort of brainy young men. Astoria owes a lasting debt of gratitude to the members of the committee, who have unstintedly given their time and energy to the preparations.

The sneak thief who ran away with the speech of Representative Swanson of Virginia describes himself as a professional bag-snatcher. Another time he will be beware of bags of wind.

Senator Carmack of Tennessee thrills Washington with the news that he sees victory ahead. The main question is: Can the judge sprint fast enough to catch up to it?

The election of General Blackmar as commander-in-chief of the G. A. R. will be satisfactory not alone to members of the association of old soldiers, but as well to all Americans.

If Russia ever undertook to search a ship commanded by Robley D. Evans it would find that there are things more explosive than Japanese torpedoes.

One reason why we all eat so much meat is that the butcher, on being asked for a small steak, puts out such a haughty and disdainful air.



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